

dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the Ministry of Community and Social Services

Restructuring and strategies for placement

Implementation of the restructuring of MCSS has begun in earnest and a number of staffing changes have already taken place (see "People on the move" on page 2 for some of these changes).

Deputy Minister Rosemary Proctor sent an e-mail on July 28th explaining the strategies for placement, it included a "question-and-answer" attachment explaining in detail how positions will be filled. You can obtain the entire e-mail from the Implementation Team which has replaced the Restructuring Project Team (see the box, "Who to contact," on how to reach them). A follow-up e-mail about job postings from Assistant Deputy Minister Lynn MacDonald was sent out Aug. 6.

Initially, the strategy notes that there is a "pool" of ministry employees who may apply for new/restructured corporate positions. The selection process includes an interview. The plan is for staff to be notified of all selection decisions by September 15th; selection decisions for area office jobs should be made by the week of Sept. 6, and selection decisions finalized for corporate/head office positions during the weeks of Sept. 13 and 27. Area office job postings were sent out Aug. 13 with an Aug. 30th deadline for applications; remaining available corporate positions were to be posted the week of Aug. 23. People in the "pool" of employees were eligible to apply for the new/restructured jobs in the area offices as well as for corporate positions.

The schedule calls for surplus notices to staff who have not been placed to sent out by Sept. 30.

The "pool" includes employees who work in regional offices, Community Services Branch, Operational Coordination Branch, secondees within the affected areas and secondees who do not have a job to return to; it also includes surplus employees in

facilities at or above the level of the job.

A staff training and development plan is being prepared to support staff through restructuring.

Positions are being posted by e-mail, hard-copy postings on bulletin boards, and special invitations to affected staff who are part of the identified pool.

For more information, the Human Resources Branch contacts are: Darlene Yewer at 416-327-4750; Ruth Franks, Head Office Unit Manager, at 416-327-4642, or the Implementation Team (see box).

Who to contact

As announced in July, Ron Murray is leading the Implementation Team that is guiding the ministry through its restructuring.

Ron, who was a member of the Restructuring Project Team, reports to Deputy Minister Rosemary Proctor and liaises with the assistant deputy ministers. Lorraine Young, who was also a member of the project team, is acting as Ron's associate and plays a key role in the work. Other former members of the project team have been assisting the Implementation Team with transitional tasks.

The ADMs are each responsible for implementing the restructuring changes in their respective divisions, and are assigning staff to co-ordinate this work.

The Implementation Team can be reached at the same location and line as the Restructuring Project Team — that is, by phone at 416-325-5820, on e-mail by typing RESTRUC_PROJ AT AI AT HPOLIB, and at the same 7th floor, Hepburn Block office.

New jobs, new places: redeployment stories

Stories and photos by Marvin Ross

Editor's note: In the coming months, many ministry employees will be redeployed, often to new jobs in new places. In coming issues, Dialogue will be showing you some redeployment success stories like the people described here.

Remembrance Day 1992 is one day that Joan Johnston will not forget. That was the date the senior counsellor at Huronia Regional Centre in Orillia received her surplus notice. It was also the beginning of a new start for her.

Joan was not expecting to be made surplus and, in fact, was the only person in her category who was. The announcement

came as quite a shock to her but she had already done some self-assessment and had taken courses to help herself become more marketable should she become surplus.

Within three months of being declared surplus, she had found a job at a comparable salary as a family benefits caseworker in the income maintenance office in Aurora. She was the second person in her group of 38 to find a job.

Joan attributes her success to maintaining a positive attitude, to being optimistic that the changes would be beneficial, to using all of the redeployment resources that were made available to her and to searching out as many opportunities on her own that she could.

Joan found the redeployment staff to be

very helpful and supportive and, after getting over the shock, felt special because of all the attention she was getting from those trying to help. "Everything," she says, "went smoothly." Because she had to move to be able to take the new job, she worked with the government's Home Owner Employee Relocation Plan (HFERP), in which "I got a guaranteed price for my house and all my relocation expenses were covered."

Another story, "A brand-new life," continues on page 2



Joan Johnston at her new job in Aurora's income maintenance office — a big change from working at Huronia Regional Centre.

Social contract ratified

In a vote taken by most union locals August 10th, OPSEU agreed to the terms negotiated under the government's social contract. It's part of the Ontario Public Service's commitment to save \$210 million from a target of \$2 billion under the social contract. Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) represents about 60,000 employees and, for the purposes of the social contract only, the Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario (AMACEO) represents about 18,000.

The highlights of the agreement are as follows:

- The agreement runs until Mar. 31, 1996.
- The existing collective agreement and wage rates are untouched, and employees earning less than \$30,000 a year (measured on a full-time equivalent basis) will not be adversely affected.

As of June 14th of this year, there is a freeze on wage rates, merit increases and movement up through the salary grid. Grid movement is expected to begin again April 1, 1996, but will not be retroactive.

• Effective Aug. 1 of this year, a number of classification grievances are withdrawn and no new ones may be filed.

• As most employees are aware, unpaid days off are to be taken as part of cost-savings measures. This is being required by the government, and is being done in order to achieve the savings targets.

Already, Aug. 20, 27 and Sept. 3 have been designated as unpaid days off. Our ministry is planning on a total of 10 unpaid days for this fiscal year.

Note that certain MCSS facilities — mainly because they provide residential care — will remain open during social contract closure days.

While the residential portions of these

facilities will remain open, outreach services will not be available. These are Schedule I facilities for people with developmental handicaps, directly-operated children's mental health centres, and observation and detention centres that usually operate 24 hours a day. They are:

Toronto's York Detention Centre, Thistletown Regional Centre, Syl Apps, Adult Occupational Centre (Edgar), Huronia Regional Centre, Ottawa Youth Detention Centre, Prince Edward Heights, D'Arcy Place, Rideau Regional Centre, London Detention Centre for Youth, Hamilton's Arrell Youth Centre, Child Parent Resource Institute (CPRI), Southwest Regional Centre, Midwestern Regional Centre, Oxford Regional Centre, Algoma Observation and Detention Home, Project DARE (South River) and Northwestern Regional Centre.

• To cover the unpaid leave, the ministry

will reduce members' pay cheques by 6.25 per cent (the pro-rated method) for the rest of this fiscal year (Mar. 31, 1994) beginning with the Sept. 9 pay. This is unless you opted before Aug. 23, in writing, to have pay deducted at the actual time when the unpaid leave takes place, at a rate of 10 per cent of gross bi-weekly pay.

• The "Factor 80" program, or Voluntary Exit Option which allows employees to retire early on an unreduced pension, has been extended. If you're eligible, or will be before Mar. 31, 1996, contact your Human Resources representative immediately.

Detailed messages from Management Board of Cabinet Secretary Valerie Gibbons and our Human Resources Director Mary Kardos Burton were sent on ministry e-mail Aug. 12 and 13. For a copy, ask your manager.

Employment equity and redeployment

by Rosemary Horvath & Jo-Ann Walter

Employment equity remains a priority of this ministry during this period of re-organization and fiscal constraint. The focus of the Employment Equity Program has shifted to helping minimize the negative impact of redeployment on employees who are members of the designated groups, and maximizing any opportunities as a result of changes in achieving the ministry's employment equity goals.

It's estimated that last fiscal year, in those of our facilities for people with developmental disabilities where surplus notices were issued, almost 75 per cent of the total staff were members of at least one or more of the five designated groups.

Failing to successfully redeploy these and other designated-group employees could severely hurt our ministry's representation of designated-group members.

The MCSS Employment Equity Office is working closely with the ministry's Redeployment Unit to ensure that the redeployment process is barrier-free.

The redeployment process involves assigning surplus employees to job vacancies using direct assignment. This is the process by which Ontario Public Service (OPS) employees are matched with OPS job vacancies. The vacancy skills assessment in the job information package is compared to the surplus employee's skills assessment in their employee portfolio.

The job information package contains a job advertisement, job specifications, vacancy skills assessment and job qualifications. This package is completed by managers who have a vacant position. The package is also reviewed by the EE Office to ensure that the job advertisement is barrier-free and the vacancy skills assessment reflects entry-level job qualifications.

The employee portfolio is designed to help market the skills, abilities and experience of employees to potential employers within the OPS. The portfolio is prepared by redeployment advisors in consultation with the employee. It includes



a resume, skills assessment, a performance review (completed by the surplus employee's manager) and details of circumstances which triggered placement on the surplus list.

Managers may not know exactly which employees are members of the designated groups. Consequently, managers should let all employees know that they are available to assist in meeting their employment accommodation needs. Employees should also identify if they have any accommodation needs.

Not only is employment accommodation a good business practice but the Ontario Human Rights Code states that employers must provide employment accommodation short of undue hardship. Examples of employment accommodation are postponing the start date of an employee to allow participation in a religious celebration of the person's faith, or making job postings available in larger print for those with visual disabilities.

One way to maximize the positive effects of redeployment on employment equity is to provide a re-training opportunity for the pre-surplus employee whose designated group is under-represented in that occupation. This could enable the pre-surplus employee to successfully compete for a position.

The MCSS Employment Equity and Redeployment Reference Group is a pilot project with members from field and corporate offices. The group's mandate is to identify and help overcome barriers in the redeployment process. The group is chaired by Rosemary Horvath of the Employment Equity Office. The other members are Marie Haber, Northwestern Regional Centre; Margaret Julian, North Regional Office; Esther Kulman, Redeployment Unit; and Lynne Swanson, Southwestern Regional Office.

If you have questions about redeployment as it relates to employment equity, contact Rosemary Horvath at (416) 327-4811 or any member of the group named above.

Rosemary Horvath is a program advisor and Jo-Ann Walter a program assistant with the Employment Equity Office.

A brand-new life in Oshawa



Colleen Vandevalk has made the transition to a new job and new city — and, she'll soon become a mother too.

Colleen Vandevalk was a bit hesitant about the relocation program at first. She and her husband had just bought a house and were planning to start a family when she was declared surplus in her job as a residential counsellor at Huronia Regional Centre in November. Today, expecting a child, and in a new home and job in Oshawa, she has mostly good things to say about relocation and the staff who helped her.

"It scared me at first," she says now, "but I would do it again because there was so much support behind me."

When Colleen was made surplus, she began taking a number of training courses and realized that she had more skills than she thought. She also got a number of job interviews, but lost out because of seniority (which she feels is one of the flaws in the process).

However, she did manage to find a position as an income maintenance clerk in the Oshawa office and, three months after being declared surplus, she began her new job. Because of the need to sell her house and to find another one, she spent five days a week living in a motel over a two-month period, which she says was very difficult.

Relocation staff at HRC were very helpful and "catered to my needs and gave me everything I required." Aside from the moral support, all Colleen's moving and real estate expenses were covered.

Today, Colleen is quite enthusiastic about her new job and looking forward to the arrival of her child, due at Christmas.

Mariam Ross was a planning officer with Central Regional Office who recently became a data analyst with the Employment Equity Office at the Ministry of Citizenship.

People on the move

John Hewitt has become the administrator of Prince Edward Heights, Picton. Previously he was administrator with Oxford Regional Centre, Woodstock.

Murray Hamilton has taken on the administrator's duties at Oxford. Previously he was the Southwest Region director.

Frederick Koch has joined the Children's Services Branch to work on special projects in the area of young offenders, including split jurisdiction.

Kathy Macpherson has become the manager of the Physical Workplace Program. Before that she was manager of the MCSS Employment Equity Program.

Christine Macartney, who led the ministry's recent Restructuring Project Team, has retired from the ministry after 28 years in the Ontario Public Service. She began her career in 1965 at Thistlewood when it was part of the Ministry of Health.

John Rabeau is leaving MCSS to join

the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, where he will become Director of Native Negotiations. He had been with MCSS for 24 years and since 1984 had been the North Region director.

Alison Fraser, who has been acting director of Policy Development and Program Design, has decided to return to her home town of Ottawa and is pursuing opportunities with the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Shirley Hoy leaves us Sept. 7 to take on new responsibilities as Assistant Deputy Minister of Operations with the Ministry of Housing. She was our ADM of Social Assistance and Employment Opportunity as well as ADM of the Ontario Women's Directorate. Kevin Costante has been appointed Acting ADM in her place. Kevin was Executive Co-ordinator of the Estimates Secretariat in the Strategic Directions Division.

A "Turning Point" for social assistance

Ontario is scrapping the welfare system as we know it and is replacing it with more effective programs, MCSS Minister Tony Stilo announced July 8.

The new system will focus on helping people prepare for and get jobs, the minister said. "We will have new programs that help people get training, get education, and get back to work."

The plans are outlined in a public paper, *Turning Point: New Support Programs for People with Low Incomes*. It outlines the government's intention to create three new programs: the Ontario Child Income Program, the Ontario Adult Benefit and JOB LINK.

The Ontario Child Income Program will provide a monthly cheque to all low-income families in Ontario, including low-income



families with parents working full-time. The Ontario Adult Benefit will replace the complicated two-tiered Family Benefits/General Welfare Assistance system with a streamlined, unified system. JOB LINK will help Ontario Adult Benefit recipients prepare for and find work; when fully developed, it will place participants in Ontario's high schools, community colleges, training courses and pre-employment program and connect them to apprenticeship programs and workplaces.

Staff may receive more information, including the Turning Point brochure, through the Communications and Marketing Branch Inquiries Office (416-325-5667). Nancy Naylor is in charge of co-ordinating the policy work on the Social Assistance Reform Project, while Debbie Moretti is co-ordinating the operational work.

An open house

All government employees are invited to see the displays at an open house being sponsored by the Native Affairs Secretariat's Corporate Public Education Committee. It's being held Sept. 23 and 24 in the St. Lawrence Lounge in the Macdonald Block of Queen's Park, and will highlight aboriginal communities and individuals. You may sample aboriginal cuisine, watch dancers perform to drums in native attire and learn more about aboriginal cultures. The hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., with dance performances at noon.

International Year of the Family

The United Nations has declared 1994 as the International Year of the Family (IYF).

Past years have recognized the International Year of Women (1975) and Disabled Persons (1981). This is the International Year of Aboriginal Peoples.

The theme for IYF is "Family: Resources and Responsibilities in a Changing World." The family was selected as the topic for the international year because it is the basic unit of society.

One way Canadian governments, including the province of Ontario, will acknowledge IYF is through the use of the IYF logo on official communications. It depicts the elements one ideally finds in home and in family (see illustration).

At MCSS head office, an IYF co-ordinating group has been set up with members from several branches. In coming months, Communications and



The IYF logo depicts a heart sheltered by a roof, linked by another heart — symbolizing life and love in a home where one finds warmth, caring, security, togetherness, tolerance and acceptance.

Marketing Branch will contact area offices to encourage a co-ordinated approach to ministry IYF activities.



For more than 35 years, Mary and Harvey Hines opened their homes to young people such as clients from Muskoka Centre.

Muskoka memories

An important chapter in the book of Muskoka Centre's history took place June 25th when the last residential clients left the centre to live in homes in the community.

The centre has officially closed and staff are being redeployed to jobs, sometimes in other communities.

A look back at Muskoka's history of service to clients and the community would not be complete without also looking at the many people associated with the centre who shared their homes and lives in the Bracebridge and Gravenhurst area, and who assisted our clients to live full and happy lives.

Among these people are Mary and Harvey Hines, who for 35 years opened their Bracebridge home to developmentally disabled young people from all over the province, and taught them to live independently in a home setting. With a reputation for taking in boarders, their association with Muskoka began with a call from the facility in 1957 asking if they could take two young women. At their peak, the

Hineses were caring for 18 young people — some disabled, some not — including their own four sons.

Another couple whose names are inextricably linked with Muskoka are Shirley and Norm Stevenson. For years, their home was a holiday destination and a place of respite for developmentally disabled young people. Marilyn Dolmage, who until recently was manager of community services at Muskoka, said "many of our clients got their first taste of community living" at the Stevenson's place on Private Street in Gravenhurst. Shirley Stevenson recalls that at the time her home was opened to our clients, it was the first and only "co-location" (respite) home in Ontario. A total of 78 young people stayed there for up to several weeks over the past 15 years, she says.

Although the Stevensons are no longer doing respite care, they are continuing their association with MCSS under the FamilyHome program, as are the Hineses, through Community Living Muskoka.

Coping with anger



Coping With Anger course participants practise relaxation exercises with (third from left) instructor Sherry Glena, Colleen Bennett-Fogolin (centre) and support worker Andrea Johnson (second from right).

Photo: Elvira Grolleau/NAC

Do you hurt other people's feelings by yelling, teasing or making sarcastic remarks, especially when you're angry? Do you perhaps even stomp doors, break objects, or harm yourself or others? Are there things you do or say when upset and that you later feel guilty or depressed about?

Anybody can admit that they've indulged in at least one of these behaviours, as have many participants at a course called Coping With Anger, held at Northwestern Regional Centre in Thunder Bay.

That's why psychometrist Colleen Bennett-Fogolin and program support worker Sherry Glena created a 10-week course to help people with developmental disabilities cope effectively with their

feelings of anger. The course teaches participants to identify their feelings, effective ways to cope with anger, relaxation and other skills.

The small-group format — only four participants are in each course — helps to provide individual attention.

Colleen and Sherry say the course can be adapted to help verbal and non-verbal people by using devices such as letter boards and Bliss symbol charts. It was felt that non-verbal people particularly need the opportunity to learn to express themselves as fully as possible.

An instructor's manual and participant exercise book are to be available eventually. If interested, contact NRC's Community Services Unit at 807-343-4321.

Safeguards update: "If it's wrong..."

In our Fall 1992 issue, *Dialogue* reported on the implementation of the Safeguards Report, a ministry project intended to improve safeguards for children in residential care.

One of the products of the Safeguards project has been the development of a creative "rights" information package, called "If It's Wrong, Right It!" The material was funded by MCSS and produced by OnChild (The Ontario Association of Children's and Youth Institutions) in collaboration with several other ministries, children's associations and youth groups.

The package — which includes a poster and a video — is being made available to all MCSS children's residential settings and to foster homes as well as provincial schools for the deaf and Phase II young offender settings.

Hugh Robinson, the Safeguards project manager, says the material is not intended to replace an agency's legislative responsibility to inform children of their rights and responsibilities.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Your responsibilities mean someone else can enjoy his or her rights.

To make the place you live in run smoothly and safely, there are rules to follow.

These rules vary, and in some places they are stricter than others. However, it's your responsibility to know what the rules of your home are.

It's also your right to know what will happen if you break those rules. Then choose to do.

"We hope that staff will use the material as a tool to engage in discussions with kids," says Hugh, "and we think the material has some staff training value as well."

The material is being distributed by the Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse to every residential youth setting in the province, including Ministry of Corrections phase 2, foster care and schools for the deaf as well as all community colleges. Several youth groups are also helping to market the package.

While the focus of the material is on kids' rights, says Hugh, the importance of responsibilities is also included. Just like the poster says: "Rights means responsibilities. And if you're acting out, you're probably stepping on someone else's rights."

If you'd like more information about the package, contact Hugh at 416-325-5530.



Employment Systems Review begins

More than 70 MCSS employees applied for volunteer positions on the Employment Systems Review Task Force announced in May. After reviewing the applications to ensure that the task force is representative of the ministry's diverse workforce, co-chairs Sheila Masters (representing management) and Paul Simcoe (representing OPSEU) selected the members, who were subsequently appointed by Deputy Minister Rosemary Proctor.

The ESR Task Force and project members seen here are: (seated) Sheila Masters, Hunter Sagar, Lisa Ker and Nicole True; standing, administrative assistant Lynda Williams, Helen Galley, project manager Joan Cunningham, Indira

Singh, consultant Patrick Anderson, Maureen Molinaro, Jack Muddle, Rick Beaver, Laurie Morin and Mike Akpata. Not seen in the photo is co-chair Paul Simcoe.

The purpose of the task force is to assist MCSS in creating an equitable working environment that's free of discriminatory barriers. If you would like more information, or feel you have ideas or experiences you can contribute to the work of the task force or its working groups, please contact Joan Cunningham (416-327-4933), or Lynda Williams (327-4912). Faxes may be sent to 327-0568, or write to the project at 56 Wellesley St. West, 17th floor, Toronto M7A 1E9.

Brian Pickell photo



Officially open for business

The MCSS Career Centre is officially open for business, following a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony on July 8th with Corporate Services ADM Lynn MacDonald wielding the ceremonial scissors (inset photo) and an open house July 15th. The centre is a service of the MCSS Library and Career Resources and can help all employees with career planning and career change. The friendly staff you see above are co-ordinator Elizabeth Sharp, who's the one to call for more information about what the centre can do for you (she's already been swamped with requests for service). With her are Audrey Gough and Chris Gardner, both from Human Resources, who assisted in getting the centre up and running. Reach Elizabeth at 880 Bay St.,

Room 415, Toronto M7A 1E9, or by phone (416-326-9776), fax (326-6453), on e-mail (after TO: type in CAREER). Walk-in hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

It's Systems

Readers of the July/August issue of *Dialogue* may have wondered about the Corporate Services Division's "name change" for the so-called "Information Services Branch." Rest assured — these are still the same people you know and rely upon as Information Systems Branch. (Just call them "ISB" for short.)

Campaign STOPs shoplifting



A scene during the filming of an anti-shoplifting video to be shown to Sault Ste. Marie students during the school year. Some MCSS North Regional Office employees were "extras" for the filming — that's executive assistant Delores Credon sitting in front of the cameraman, and next to her is finance officer trainee Sharon Morphet. Behind the female young offender, although you can't quite see her, is secretary Brenda Torquato, who played the girl's mother.

Photo courtesy of The Sault Star

Every Grade Six student in Sault Ste. Marie is going to know about the pitfalls of shoplifting through a special program in their school.

MCSS Probation Services is working with the local chamber of commerce, city police, youth court, the John Howard Society and retail stores on a campaign to prevent shoplifting among potential young offenders. A key component is a video that will be shown to every Grade 6 class in the city (because the 10-to-13 age group is the target age).

Probation officer Kristin Kovacs, who is among the probation staff working with the local committee on the STOP ("Shoplifting Takes Our Profits") campaign, says this is the crime most often committed by first-time young offenders aged 12 to 15. A local study recently showed that 81 per cent of all charges laid against first-timers were about the thief under \$1,000, or nearly 400 young offenders over a four-year period.

In February, the ministry hosted a

meeting of community organizations with an interest in preventing shoplifting and youth crime. A key element of STOP is a 20-minute video that shows the consequences of shoplifting. Family Life Theatre, a local group, is assisting with the production and the video will be linked with the city police services program called "Values Influences Peers" (VIP). Zoltan says the local business community itself, through the local chamber of commerce, insisted on providing key funding for the project.

Another source of funding has been the Alternative Measures Program for young offenders. Soo youth who go through the program are required to donate to a local charity, and the STOP program can, and has received donations from these youth.

The ministry's Probation Services will issue an annual report of relevant statistics to see if the campaign contributes to the overall objective of reducing charges by 50 per cent.

Help over the hurdles

Summer is always a busy time at Project DARE, our young offender facility near South River, where young clients learn about responsibility, co-operation and self-sufficiency in an outdoor setting. In this photo we show some of the kids in a co-operative exercise, in which the climber must obtain the assistance of the other participants to climb over a log that's about 10 feet off the ground.



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Ontario Community and Social Services

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